Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 180861
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 180861

EXDIS FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT PRETORIA 4044 ACTION SECSTATE AND USUN NEW YORK INFO BONN, DAR ES SALAAM, GABORONE, LAGOS, LONDON, LUSAKA, MAPUTO, OTTAWA, AND PARIS DATED JULY 17, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4044

EXDIS
E.O. 11652: GDS
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: THE SAG AND THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE
TAGS: PORT, SF, WA
1. THE PRETORIA FIVE MET TODAY, JULY 17, TO DISCUSS THE SAG'S FURTHER REACTION OVER THE WEEKEND TO OUR PRESENTATION OF JULY 15 AND TO REVIEW THE TACTICAL SITUATION. ALTHOUGH NO JOINT REPORT WAS PREPARED, THE FOLLOWING IS OUR ANALYSIS BASED ON THE THINKING OF THE GROUP.

2. BOTHA'S RADIO INTERVIEW OF JULY 16 (PRETORIA 4017) AND TAYLOR'S CONVERSATION WITH NEIL VAN HEERDEN (PRETORIA 4016) SUGGEST THAT THE SAG IS CAUTIOUSLY CONSIDERING ITS OPTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE INTENTION OF THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 180861

TO SUPPORT A RESOLUTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON WALVIS BAY. PRUDENCE WAS ALSO REFLECTED IN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER'S DECISION AS RELAYED BY VAN HEERDEN, TO DELAY ANY DEFINITIVE SAG REACTION.

3. THERE IS NOT DOUBT THAT BOTHA WAS SIGNALING THAT, IF THE RESOLUTION APPEARED TO THREATEN THE SAG ON THE

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

ISSUE OR TO COMPROMISE ITS LEGAL POSITION, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL COULD BE ENDANGERED. THE SAG APPEARS MOST CONCERNED WITH A POSSIBLE COERCIVE ELEMENT IN THE RESOLUTION. IT IS ALSO, AS VAN HEERDEN INDICATED, A MATTER OF FACE FOR VORSTER AND THE SAG NOT TO BE SEEN TO BE NEGOTIATING UNDER THREAT ON AN ISSUE ON WHICH SOUTH AFRICA BELIEVES IT HAS AN UNASSAILABLE LEGAL POSITION.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE SAG DOES NOT RELISH THE OPTION OF TORPEDOING THE WESTERN PLAN ON THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE. BOTHA AND VORSTER, WE BELIEVE, REALIZE THAT THEY WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY ABANDONING AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION ON NAMIBIA IN PROTEST OF A RESOLUTION ON WALVIS BAY. IN HIS RADIO INTERVIEW, BOTHA WAXED MORE ENTHUSIASTIC THAN EVERN BEFORE ABOUT THE "DRAMATIC AND HISTORIC" POSSIBILITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WESTERN AGREEMENT, THUS UNDERSCORING TO HIS AUDIENCE THE GREAT COST THAT WOULD BE PAID IN SCUTTLING THE VENTURE AT THIS POINT.

5. THE SAG IS UNDOUBTEDLY HOPING THAT ITS INITIAL REACTION WILL UNDERSCORE THE STRENGTH OF ITS POSITION ON WALVIS BAY AND WIN SOME AMELIORATING STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS FROM THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS. AT THE SAME TIME CONFIDENTIAL

WE SUSPECT VORSTER IS PROBABLY HOPING FOR A WAY OUT OF THIS DILEMMA THAT WILL PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA'S BASIC "RIGHTS" REGARDING WALVIS BAY AND ALLOW IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL TO PROCEED. THE KEY, WE BELIEVE, IS BOTHA'S REFERENCE TO RESPECT FOR "THE LEGAL BASIS" OF THE SAG'S POSITION. HIS LIST OF SOUTH AFRICAN INTERESTS IN WALVIS BAY, MOREOVER, MAY WELL FORECAST THE KIND OF DEMANDS THAT MAY BE PUT FORTH IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS THE SAG IS WILLING TO ENTER RE WALVIS BAY.

6. IN GENERAL THE PRETORIA FIVE AGREED THAT WHILE WE MUST WEIGHT CAREFULLY THE PROBABLY REACTION OF SWAPO AND THE FRONTLINE STATES, OUR CHANCES OF KEEPING SOUTH AFRICA TIED INTO THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS WILL BE STRONGEST IF, BOTH IN EXPLAINING OUR POSITION TO THE SAG AND VOICING SUPPORT FOR THE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION IN THE UNSC, WE CAN REITERATE WESTERN NEUTRALITY ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF WALVIS BAY AND AVOID ANY THREAT OF SECURITY COUNCIL INTERVENTION IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IN ADDITION, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE, IF POSSIBLE BY CLEARLY SEPARATE HANDLING OF A WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION THAT THERE IS NO LINKAGE BETWEEN

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

IT AND THE WESTERN SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS. IT ALSO SEEMED CLEAR THAT THE SAG WOULD BE LESS DISTURBED BY WESTERN SUPPORT OF A MODERATE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION THAN BY WESTERN SPONSORSHIP.

7. DURING THE PRETORIA FIVE MEETING AN FCO CABLE FROM LONDON WAS RECEIVED REVIEWING THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS IN BONN LAST NIGHT. THE GROUP AGREED THAT THE SCENARIO DECIDED ON BY THE MINISTERS WAS WELL DESIGNED TO SERVE OUR OBJECTIVES HERE. IN PARTICULAR, WE NOTED THE DEFINITION OF THE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION AS AN AFRICAN AND NOT A WESTERN INITIATIVE, AND THE INTENTION, IF POSSIBLE, TO DEBATE THE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION SECOND WITH FINAL ACTION DELAYED UNTIL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 180861

JULY 29 OR JULY 31. THE GROUP AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST NOT TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED TIMETABLE IN THE UN WITH BOTHA UNTIL THE AFRICAN STATES AND SWAPO CONCUR IN IT.
8. THE FCO MESSAGE INSTRUCTED BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DAVID SCOTT TO DELIVER THE MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN AS PROPOSED IN THE NEW YORK CONTACT GROUP DRAFT. SIR DAVID WILL HOLD UP DELIVERY OF CALLAGHAN'S MESSAGE UNTIL THE OTHER FOUR HAVE RECEIVED CLEARED TEXTS OF SIMILAR MESSAGES FOR VORSTER.

9. THE PRETORIA FIVE HAD ONLY ONE SUGGESTED CHANGE IN THE TEXT OF THE MESSAGE AS DRAFTED BY THE CONTACT GROUP. IN PARAGRAPH 5 WE RECOMMEND SUBSTITUTION OF THE WORDS "IN OTHER WAYS" FOR WORD "ETHNICALLY". THE TANZANIANS WERE CORRECT IN OBJECTING EARLIER TO THE TERM "ETHNICALLY". WHITES ARE THE LARGEST GROUP IN WALVISY BAY AND WITH COLOREDS MAKE UP A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY, NOT COUNTING OVAMBO CONTRACT WORKERS.

10. I INFORMED SIR DAIVD OF THE MAYNES-MCHENRY-HARROP RECOMMENDATION (STATE 179657) THAT IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT SAG ATTITUDE, THE PROPOSED LETTERS SHOULD BE SENT BY THE RESPECTIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO BOTHA RATHER THAN BY CHIEFS OF GOVERNMENT TO VORSTER.
SCOTT SAID THAT HE WOULD PREPARE ALTERNATIVE DRAFTS.
EDMONDSON
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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20 Mar 2014
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